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ABSTRACT

Negative journalistic opinion on bilingual education has been widespread enough to have formed the context of public opinion within which national policy on bilingual education has been set. It can be surmised that what is propelling the journalistic assault on bilingual education is the particular orientation English monolinguals have adopted toward this activity. Orientation is here used as a description of the composite of attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, and perspectives that influence thinking and behavior. What is proposed is that proponents of bilingual education must develop a well articulated positive orientation toward bilingual education to be counterposed to the negative orientation in the mass media and other arenas. Such an orientation should be based on both ideal and reality principles, and be expressed in the interplay between and among these principles. Ideal principles suggested are: (1) "e pluribus unum"; (2) responsive government which would bring assistance and protection to bilingual communities; and (3) community groundedness, or grounding bilingual policies on the needs of bilingual communities from the perspective of these communities. In addition, several reality principles are suggested. These have to do with history, social status, and political power or powerlessness. (AMH)

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# A Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Bilingual Education Policy Formation *

Raymond V. Padilla

When it comes to determining what ought to be done in public education, almost everyone feels capable of rendering a knowledgeable opinion. If a similar situation were to prevail say in medicine, so that the average person could self-prescribe medication, surely the physicians would argue that the self-medicating person has a quack for a doctor and a fool for a patient. But apparently quackery is not widely recognized in education, and as a consequence there is some difficulty in separating the fools from the sages as they prescribe and proscribe educational practices.

Take bilingual education as a case in point. When it comes to pontificating about the alleged evils and social destructiveness of bilingual education, just about any columnist or journalist can do it with remarkable facility. For instance, Noel Epstein (1977) psychoanalyzed the U.S. Congress and determined that it suffered from a "Columbus Complex." As evidence of this congressional malady he singled out the enactment of Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1968) which is the title that permits federal grants to local school districts wishing to implement bilingual instructional techniques.

Going even further, Epstein also psychoanalyzed the Hispanic community in mass and concluded that its advocacy for bilingual education has little to do with a desire for educational improvement but is related instead to the group's effort to promote what Epstein called "affirmative ethnicity." Having thus reduced bilingual education to a congressional aberration on the one hand and to ethnic machismo on the other, Epstein unblushingly transformed the complex policy issues of bilingual education into a simple and rhetorical question: Should it be the role of the federal government

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to support affirmative ethnicity? His answer was a definitive no. Ethnicity, he argued, should be promoted in the home and in private.

This fanciful argument apparently had an impact on impressionable fellow journalists. In the context of the federal requirement for bilingual ballots in certain situations, and further sparked by the publication of the "Lau remedies", the Wall Street Journal (1976) editorialized under the banner of "Confusion and Ethnic Identity":

> On the one hand Americans pride themselves on their racial melting pot, on the other hand racial and ethnic awareness have never been more pronounced that they are today. Which is why ideally we should make every allowance for and even encourage these distinctions in our private arrangements, but refrain from writing them into law.

Espousing the same perspective, The Detroit News (1978) editorialized under the headline "Affirmative Ethnicity":

> Today one of the hottest educational issues in Detroit and other major cities is whether to foster the transition [to English] from a foreign language and culture or, instead, to preserve "ethnic purity."

By these words the editor shows both the influence of Epstein's fanciful reductionism and a gratuitous effort to associate bilingual education with the unfortunate and much publicized "ethnic purity" remark made by Jimmy Carter in his dogged bid for the presidency.

Such vacuous associations, however, are not uncommon in the journalistic view of bilingual education as a policy issue. For example, Phillip W. Quigg (1978) associated bilingual education with nothing less than the potential downfall of the Republic. He somberly intoned: "To require that public documents and notices be printed in Spanish and that Spanish be used as the language of instruction in the schools is not the course of liberality or cultural understanding. They are merely the first steps in a degenerative process that will prove uncontrollable." He then proceeded to illustrate the putative effects of this "uncontrollable process" by describing the unhappy political relations that have existed in Canada between

the French speaking population of Quebec province and the rest of English speaking Canada. According to Quigg, the heated linguistic dispute in Canada is the cause--and it does not even occur to him that it might be the effect--of deep political and economic cleavages that our northern neighbor has experienced. Then switching to a quasi constitutional argument, Quigg contends that "The notion that minorities have linguistic rights, which the state must provide, seems totally alien to the spirit of our constitution." Quigg thus tries, quite unconvincingly, to vest English monolingualism with at least the semblance of constitutional authority although there is absolutely no stipulation whatsoever in the constitution declaring the U.S. an English monolingual country. Interestingly, there is a plausible constitutional argument in support of non-English languages if one examines some of the treaties and accords into which the U.S. has entered (Macias, 1979). One example might be the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in which the U.S. agreed to protect the rights of the newly incorporated former Mexican citizens with respect to property, religion, and culture (Tate, 1970). In any event, Quigg's principal aim was to attack bilingual education by associating it with the threat commonly attributed to separatist movements and by claiming that bilingual education imperils national unity.

Taking a similar line of attack, Albert Shanker (1980), a self-financed columnist in the New York Times and the principal mouthpiece of the United Federation of Teachers, castigated the U.S. Department of Education for proposing regulations pursuant to the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in Lau v. Nichols (1974). "The proposal is an unmitigated disaster," he declared. "It threatens the fabric of American education and the future of our country." And after incorrectly claiming (see Troike, 1978; Lambert and Tucker, 1972) that evidence is lacking as to the relative effectiveness of the different educational programs available for students

of limited English proficiency, he asked ominously: "Will federal programs lead the U.S. to become another Quebec?" Whatever the answer to this question, Shanker attacked the proposed federal policy as a "radical change" from previous policy that was "bad for the child" and that would "do harm to the nation."

Continuing the argument of impending national disaster, Henry E. Catto, Jr. (1980) made what is perhaps the most dire prediction to date. Writing in Newsweek, as Quigg had done before him, Catto gloomily prognosticated that "By the end of the next decade it is entirely possible that the United States will once again confront the fateful choice it faced in 1860: schism or civil war. The cause this time will be language . . ." He goes on to recant his 1967 testimony in favor of bilingual education because " . . . the winsome babe has, in its maturity, turned monstrous." And what is so monstrous about bilingual education? According to Catto, it is " . . . most bizarre [that] students now have the right to be taught not only in Chinese or in Spanish, but also in Aleut, Navajo, Apache, Japanese, Yiddish, Russian, Tagalog, or any one of 60-odd additional tongues." Expanding his attack, Catto attempted to associate bilingual education with activist groups, especially Hispanics and New Left reformers who, Catto contends, are looking for a cause to fight or who are interested primarily in securing teaching jobs. Catto thus associates bilingual education with self-indulgent reformers and narrow ethnic self-interest and greed.

Catto's chicken-little perspective was picked up by another columnist, George F. Will (1980), in the aftermath of Dade county's decision to end its official bilingualism. Although it is painfully clear that Will's knowledge of bilingual education is less than enough, he charges that somehow the nation has sleepwalked toward bilingual education and that bilingual education has its roots in, of all things, the Black power movement of the sixties along

with other heady, if not seedy, happenings of that tumultuous decade. Clearly, Will's ignorance of bilingual education is more than enough. Yet with truculent casualness, this journalist associates bilingual education with a somnambulistic national leadership and a variety of presumably passe ethnic perspectives and claims, all of which imply negative connotations.

What is intriguing about these journalistic salvos, and quite a few others (Easterbook, 1980; Stone, 1979; Bethell, 1979; Schubert, 1977), is that inevitably they have formed the context of public opinion within which national policy in bilingual education has been set. Little wonder then that most congressmen and state legislators express scant eagerness for supporting bilingual education policies. At a more abstract level, one has to wonder about what is driving this relentless journalistic tirade against bilingual education. It is precisely in response to this concern that a broad theoretical framework will now be sketched.

## THE NEGATIVE ORIENTATION TOWARD BILINGUAL EDUCATION

One can speculate that what is propelling the journalistic assault on bilingual education is the particular orientation that English monolinguals have developed toward this activity. The concept of orientation has been applied by researchers and educators in a number of fairly distinct areas. For example, anthropologists such as Kluckhohn (1973) have attempted to show that value orientations are fundamental features of every culture. For a given cultural value, it is claimed, there is observable variation in the orientations adopted by different cultures toward that value. Norman Denzin (1978) uses a similar idea but in a sociological context in which the individual is presumed to develop a particular posture toward objective phenomena in the environment. From this posture, the individual invokes particular lines of action that determine his/her observable behavior and

perhaps even the degree of success in negotiating the environment. In an educational context, Paulo Freire (1970) conceives of effective group action as dependent upon generative themes and viable options or alternatives in a given society. The generative themes might be interpreted as beliefs and attitudes of high emotional content common to a particular population at a particular point in its historical development. These generative themes, when clarified, analyzed, and amplified through social interaction, can result in successful social mobilization provided that the group is driven toward objectives that are feasible or viable within the overall limiting factors of the larger society. Rogelio Diaz-Guerrero (1970), a psychologist, offers the concept of "historic socio-cultural premises" as a way to capture the fundamental orientations that seem important to an overall understanding of how individual and group behavior is manifested at a particular point in time. In short, Diaz-Guerrero argues that synchronic group behavior is conditioned both by the normative social pressures of the moment and by deeper underlying patterns of behavior and attitudes that are diachronically shaped and determined. Finally, in a specific application of the concept to bilingual education public policy, Ruiz (1981) considers that bilingual legislation at the state level is noticeably colored by the prevailing social orientations of the powers that be in the legislature.

In the present context, the notion of orientation is used as a construct that describes the composite of attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, and perspectives that influence thinking and behavior with respect to bilingual education policies and practices. More importantly perhaps, what is proposed here is that proponents of bilingual education must develop a well articulated positive orientation toward bilingual education. This new orientation then could be counterposed to the essentially negative orientation commonly expressed in the mass media and in other important arenas.

Interestingly enough, the fundamental value that is invoked by opponents of bilingual education is national unity. By so doing they cleverly put advocates of bilingual education on the defensive. Clearly, few rational people would argue with much conviction that national unity is not a desirable goal for the country. After all, it is just common sense that we have to stick together as a nation if we are to prosper in the highly competitive international arena. But by appropriating to their side the defense of national unity, opponents of bilingual education are then able to promote a variety of narrower interests and beliefs that might not be so appealing or defensible save for their linkage to the venerable principle of national unity.

Without pretention to completeness, here are some examples of these narrower interests and beliefs that undergrid the negative orientation toward bilingual education.

1. U.S. society is a "melting pot" and all newcomers must shed alien ways and adopt new customs. As an important corollary to this belief, it is assumed that all immigrants must abandon their native tongues and learn English as quickly as possible. Another corollary, though one that is not often mentioned or openly acknowledged, is that newcomers must go to the tail end of the line in terms of receiving economic benefits. In this context, it may be that the idea of economic and social bootstrapping is a popular and romanticized expression of a "last-in-last-in-line" philosophy.
2. Language differences lead to political differences and separatist movements. One corollary to this belief is that government should not be involved in providing bilingual education; bilingual education, like ethnicity, should be a private matter and one that is best carried out in the home. A second corollary is that the

public schools should teach only in English, regardless of the languages spoken by the pupils.

3. Bilingual education cheats students. It does so because it segregates them, and because it robs them of the chance to learn English. As such it diminishes their chances of obtaining a good job and relegates them to permanent disadvantagement.
4. Those who do not learn English are either lazy or un-American or both.

These and similar beliefs and attitudes are the necessary props that support the bulk of editorial opinion critical of bilingual education and what has been generally characterized here as the negative orientation toward bilingual education. Of course, these beliefs also influence the attitudes and actions of congressmen, legislators, judges, and without a doubt, educators.

## ARTICULATING A POSITIVE ORIENTATION

In spite of the fact that there has been some challenge to the negative orientation, those who hold a positive orientation have not gained ready access to the mass media. As a result, those who hold negative beliefs reinforce each other and seldom receive the benefit of contradicting findings and opinions. To counter some of this journalistic incest what follows is a proposed set of "principles" that can be elaborated--but it won't be done here--into a positive orientation toward bilingual education.

To start, it may be useful to distinguish between ideal principles and reality principles. Ideal principles tend to embody the fundamental beliefs of a people that express their nobler sentiments and their preferred ways of doing things given that baser motives and interests are not at issue. Reality principles, on the other hand, are more reflective of what people do than what they proclaim. They include economic motives and less lofty self interests,

and perhaps tend to account for social conditions more accurately than ideal principles, although it is clear that there exists continuous interplay between ideal and reality principles. In any event, three ideal principles are offered here as follows:

1. The principle of E Pluribus Unum. It has been a national tenet for over two hundred years that the U. S. is necessarily a composite of a multitude of peoples from all over the world. Many came to the new land searching for opportunities to better their lives; others came to preserve valued ways of living that they desperately wanted to maintain and pass on to their children. In this context, the literal and authentic meaning of E pluribus unum as a principle is that a cohesive governance system shall be welded together and rendered functional by the collective efforts of diverse populations. An interpretation of this principle which contends that all languages that touch upon American soil, save English, must be altered, transitioned, or eradicated is pernicious, revisionist, and at bottom, profoundly un-American. Such a narrow interpretation stands in contradiction to the beliefs of the first European Americans who long ago envisioned the great American continent as a refuge from tyrannical monotheists and monarchs.

Moreover within this great historical principle one can develop a framework of unity through pluralism. For it is clear that bilingual education is one of the few contemporary social trends that makes the case for maintaining the plural character of the nation while assuring national unity. Now there are at least two basic approaches to national unity. One is to attempt to destroy all elements that do not fit into a preestablished notion of what is the nation. The other is to expand the meaning of national identity to include all elements that form a functional part of the nation's life. The first approach is exclusionary, oppressive, and, in its day-to-day manifestations, racist. The second approach is inclusive, symbiotic, and respecting of manifest differences

in human behavior and character. The first approach ultimately leads to political tyranny and the attendant wars of liberation; the second approach, and here perhaps we must look to Nature for a guide (Thomas, 1974), should lead to balance and harmony even while immense forces and pressures are at play.

2. The principle of Responsive Government. It is worthwhile to reemphasize that the essential function of government is to provide protection for the people that it serves. Any governament without the capability to defend its people against external aggression is a contradiction in governance. A government that cannot protect its subjects from natural and social misfortunes is one good definition of a bad government. Hence, few people vilify the government when it takes reasonable measures to protect the lives and fortunes of its citizens if they have fallen upon misfortunes or hard times: Misfortunes caused by natural disasters, or even the vicissitudes of the national economy. How ludicrous then for self-appointed defenders of the national weal to enjoin the use of government resources to carry out bilingual education activities. Bilingual populations in the U.S. have suffered at the hands of traditional educators nothing less than a disaster, a misfortune of monumental proportions that is no less real because it has been ignored by many of the monophonic speakers (Carter, 1970). To say that bilingual education under these circumstances belongs only in the home and should be relegated to parents and church groups is to say the pedagogical equivalent of "Let them eat cake!" which is "Let them learn English." Unfortunately, some anglophonic American institutions have seen to it that language and ethnic differences have redounded to the detriment of certain ethnocommunities (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1971-74). Therefore it is reasonable and just that those communities should demand assistance and protection from their government. Such assistance and protection should not be given grudgingly or viewed with mock disbelief. It is clearly within the purview of government to assist and to protect its citizens.

3. The Principle of Community Groundedness. It would seem that an authentic approach toward language policy ought to be grounded in the everyday needs and conditions of the citizenry. It is all well and good to discuss language policy as an academic and scholarly activity, but an equally important need today--at least among certain ethnocommunities--is to clearly articulate possible choices among language alternatives, and to determine what impact those choices might have on the everyday conditions of those communities. Hence, a prominent concern of such ethnocommunities is the formulation of bilingual policy because bilingualism (not just language) is a feature that characterizes the ethnocommunity and renders it distinctive. In short, the point of departure for such communities is precisely their bilingual character. And their most basic need is not to discover their bilingualism--for it has been there historically and they have been conscious of that fact--or to eradicate it or to wear it like an insignia, but to fashion the future course and development of that distinctive bilingualism. In short, bilingual policies must be grounded in the objective needs of bilingual communities as perceived by those communities and within the larger context of the public interest.

In addition to these ideal principles, sever l reality principles round out the new orientation proposed for bilingual education policy formation. These reality principles in a sense can be viewed as constraints. They are as follows:

4. The Principle of Historical Overdetermination. It appears to be an inescapable conclusion that one fundamental aspect of bilingualism in the U.S., especially English-Spanish bilingualism, is its inevitable connection to a legacy of rivalry, friction, and aggression that has characterized the contacts between Iberian and Anglo-Saxon peoples on the one hand and various European and Native American nations on the other (Garcia Cantu, 1971; Medina Castro, 1971). The contemporary debate over bilingual education in the U. S. appears to be

subtended by this legacy of hostility. As a result, much of the opposition that is expressed against bilingual education in the U. S. tends to reflect the opposition's perception of some noxious, foreign, or otherwise threatening element in bilingual education.

Placed in the context of this primordial hostility, it is easier to assay the endless editorials and featurettes that harangue against the very concept and postulated results of bilingual (and bicultural) education. Few if any of these broadsides have voiced concern on genuine educational grounds. Their gripes against bilingual education are linked to bipolar notions such as unity and separatism, natives and foreigners, or quaint melting pot notions of nationhood and peoplehood. The critics argue with solemn monophonic voices that all Americans must learn English while cynically ignoring the evidence showing that certain American institutions (namely the schools) have failed to teach English and to provide a basic education to many Hispanics.

The principle of historical overdetermination is important because it should signal to advocates of bilingual education that the ideal principles of American society, even those enshrined in the national constitution, are inevitably colored by the legacy of hostility between Anglos and Indo-Hispanic peoples. The proper orientation for proponents of bilingual education, therefore, is to confront the attitudes and behaviors incident to this historical overdetermination and to attempt to replace them with perspectives more relevant to the language situation existing today in the U. S.

5. The Principle of Academic and Technocratic Linkage. Almost inevitably most societies develop a social hierarchy that endows certain classes with greater power and authority than others. In the U. S., Hispanics and most other bilingual groups are unfortunately not at the top of the social pyramid. As a result, they do not claim ready access to the decision making apparatus of the society, nor do they participate extensively in the many institutions that

function as power brokers.

One significant result of this political powerlessness is that bilingual populations are not able to exploit the many connections that exist between policy formation in the public arena and the technical and academic aspects related to bilingual education. The key difficulty is that theory and technology in bilingual education have not yet been developed to the point where they can be used effectively to support arguments for bilingual education (although that situation is rapidly changing). As a result of not having participated in significant numbers (until very recently) in higher education, bilingual populations have not been conscious enough of the fact that public policy formation is not merely political in character. It is also markedly influenced by technological and academic concerns. One might even say that public policy is determined not only by politics, but also by the politics of expertise (Benveniste, 1977). Hence, in dealing with public policy formation for bilingualism, it is important to recognize that the task is complicated by the need to understand not only politics, but applicable theory and technology as well. What makes the problem particularly burdensome is that due to social stratification members of marked bilingual populations (who are typically in the lower levels of the hierarchy) have not enjoyed ready access to higher education, thus limiting severely their current ability to support policy formation with plausible theory and workable technology. The obvious response to this situation is for bilingual communities to support greater development of theory and technology in bilingual education and to insure that are they participants in such development.

In conclusion, it would seem appropriate to highlight once again the need to fashion a fundamental orientation toward bilingual education that is positive and not antagonistic. Such an orientation could include the ideal and reality principles presented here. Also, it should be clear that bilingual

public policy formed primarily within the context of the dominant negative orientation is not likely to be equitable to the bilingual communities of this country. And surely a bilingual public policy informed mainly by a negative orientation toward bilingualism will not meet the needs of bilingual students and the communities in which they live. On the other hand, a positive orientation toward bilingualism and bilingual communities will enrich not only the members of those communities but the entire nation.

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